

Final - Wheaton Redevelopment

March 17, 2010

Mid-County Regional Services – 2424 Reddie Drive Wheaton, MD 20902

Members Present, Gregory Baker; Elizabeth Boyle; Melissa Brown; Maureen Carrington; Jonathan Fink; Rahman Harrison; Manuel Hidalgo; Zoe Lefkowitz; Chris Lindsay; Thomas Martin; Susan Petersen; Erin Roberts; Morey Rothberg; Robert Schilke; and Fran Ware

Members Absent: Mara Baer; Eleanor Duckett; Filippo Leo; Diane Lynne; and Dave Taghipour

County Staff Present: Rob Klein; Pete McGinnity; Sharon Lasswell and Natalie Cantor

Guest Speakers: Steve Robins, Attorney, Learch, Early and Brewer; Lee Driskill, HCM Architects; Daryl South, Washington Property Co.; and Bob Dalrymple, Attorney, Linowes & Blocher

Guests: Renee Montgomery, Safeway; Leith Wain, Patriot Realty; Dan Sheveiko, KHCA; Karen Cordry, KHCA; Larry Silverman, KHCA; Elena Sheveiko, KHCA; Sergay Sheveiko, KHCA; Mark Meszaros, KHCA; and Sara, KHCA

Meeting Called to Order by Chairperson Greg Baker at 7:04 p.m.

Approval of Minutes – Motion to approve the February minutes made by Ms. Brown and seconded by Mr. Fink. Minutes were approved.

Ms. Cantor spoke briefly about the FY11 Operating Budget. Each of the five Regional Centers took a 33% reduction in their budgets. All three Urban District's had reductions as well. Wheaton had a 16% reduction; Silver Spring had an 8.7% reduction; and Bethesda had a 1% reduction in their budget. Wheaton Urban District had the largest reduction primarily because Wheaton, unlike Silver Spring and Bethesda, has a larger draw from the General Fund. Public hearings on the budget will be April 4 – April 8.

Safeway Presentation by: Steve Robins, Attorney, Learch, Early and Brewer; and Lee Driskill, HCM Architects

- Provided an update on plans for new state-of-the-art Safeway;
- The building will be closer to Georgia Avenue in line with Metro Pointe; the entrance has changed;
- They are addressing street treatment on Reddie Drive; possible bike path and wider median on Reddie; it is possible exterior would be masonry;
- New Safeway will be approximately 55,000 sq. ft. (previous store was 23,000 sq. ft.);
- Will go to Planning Board on April 15; ***ACTION ITEM: WRAC will prepare a letter in accordance with the December WRAC Motion;***
- Anticipate site plan approval by the end of the year;
- Up to 500 residential units above the store;
- New store is approximately 3 times larger with 125 employees – previous store had 40 employees;
- Project will take two years to complete.

Committee members expressed their satisfaction with the project modifications.

Washington Properties Presentation by: Bob Dalrymple, Attorney, Linowes & Blocher and Daryl South, Washington Property Co.

- The First Baptist Church site is 2.3 acres – gross track area;
- It's currently zoned R60 (single-family residential) and was never changed as it was not anticipated the Church would be moving; they are proceeding with a local map amendment to rezone the property to TSR (Transit Station Residential);
- The project is a multi-family residential, 5 story stick built (75 feet) residential above a couple levels of parking; 222 multi-family apartments; lobby entrance off Georgia Avenue;
- Access is right in and right out off Georgia Avenue;
- They expect to have revised drawings in the next week or so and proceed with public meetings;
- While this project is proceeding ahead of the Sector Plan, they are still working together;
- There are issues and concerns with the stream behind the property. They are working with Parking and Planning on those issues;
- 240 foot frontage on Georgia Avenue; with stoop units facing Georgia Avenue; urban front yards; a 20 foot sidewalk with street trees; and a cyber café for the residents; no street level retail – it's success would be difficult on this site;
- Materials will be brick and hardy plank;
- There is no connection to the mall at this time;
- Will go to Planning Board in mid-summer; then to Hearing Examiner for the Zoning Application in late summer/early fall; then subdivision and site plans – total process is about 18 months;
- Washington Properties Co. was asked if they are applying for a new MS4 Storm Water Permit. They will check with their engineer.
- They are scheduled to meet with the Economic Development Subcommittee on March 25th.

Subcommittee Reports

Sector Plan Work Group by Tom Martin – At the March 1 meeting, M-NCPPC reported to the Work Group demographic information based upon the 2008 Census update. Some 81,000 persons live in the Kensington – Wheaton census area with 4,600 living in the Wheaton Sector Plan study area. In the Wheaton Sector Plan area, 52% are minority (14% Hispanic). The report points to the Wheaton housing market being composed of young professional singles. The full report can be accessed on the M-NCPPC Wheaton Sector Plan Web site.

GreenWheaton – No meeting – no report

Economic Development – No meeting – no report

Subcommittee Restructuring – Action Item by Greg Baker

- Proposed to consolidate the 5 subcommittees to 3 subcommittees – Planning & Visioning Subcommittee; Economic Development Subcommittee and the Project Review Subcommittee;
- Presented a Charter with the purpose of each Subcommittee as follows with potential projects or tasks for each subcommittee:
 - **Planning & Visioning Subcommittee** – Actively monitor and participate in Wheaton master planning process; Champion and clearly articulate previously established visioning or planning outcomes; Uphold and support implementation of existing and new Wheaton Master Plan policies; Actively identify and pursue additional resources or opportunities to further clarify, refine or enhance the vision for Wheaton. Recommend or forward any action items associated with the above to the WRAC, including but not limited to: letters of recommendation, advice, or advocacy or input for County staff, M-NCPPC staff, Planning Board, County Executive, or local, state or federal officials.

- ***Potential Projects or Tasks** - Track the Wheaton Master Plan Update process; Review past visioning products and create a WRAC vision statement; Integrate established visioning concepts into Master Plan Update; Track rezoning and development applications to ensure compliance with vision of the Master Plan; Identify options, resources or opportunities for enhancing or implementing the vision for Wheaton; and Coordinate with M-NCPPC staff and other key stakeholders.*
 - ***Project Review Subcommittee** – Inform and advise on the status of new development and redevelopment projects and proposals; Establish, maintain, and utilize, a list of core evaluation criteria for evaluating redevelopment projects; Cultivate and maintain a diplomatic or working relationship with County development review officials and representatives; Actively seek to monitor and understand the stance, concerns, or issues, of the broader Wheaton community; and Recommend or forward any action items associated with the above to the WRAC, including but not limited to: letters of recommendation, advice, or advocacy or input for County staff, M-NCPPC staff, Planning board, County Executive, or local, state or federal officials.*
 - ***Potential Projects or Tasks** – Create a list of redevelopment projects currently in the pipeline; Coordinate the provision of information or presentations to WRAC; Develop, in conjunction with County staff, a proposal, for WRAC input into the RFQ/Master Developer; Evaluate development or redevelopment proposals, and Develop a policy, process, or method, for gauging stakeholder and public sentiment.*
 - ***Economic Development Subcommittee** – Inform and advise on issues pertaining to enhancing the employment base of Wheaton; Inform and advise on issues pertaining to strengthening or preserving Wheaton’s small business base; Cultivate and sustain diplomatic or working relationship with existing Wheaton small business representatives and economic development stakeholders; Inform and advise on issues related to the promotion and marketing of the Wheaton community; and Recommend or forward any action items associated with the above to the WRAC, including but not limited to: letters of recommendation, advice, or advocacy or input for County staff, M-NCPPC staff, Planning board, County Executive, or local, state or federal officials.*
 - ***Potential Projects or Tasks** – Forward strategies or recommendations regarding the development of a primary activity for downtown Wheaton; Identify methods or strategies to reach out to residents of recent residential projects; Develop specific strategies for linking Costco customers (or similar large scale Wheaton retail customer base) to Wheaton’s local businesses; Stay abreast of county’s marketing and outreach related efforts; and Guide or monitor the development of a toolbox for small business development protection.*
- Presentations regarding substantive new development projects, site plans, proposals, redevelopment endeavors, etc. should be presented first and foremost to the whole WRAC. Any further analysis, information gathering, consideration, or deliberation may be delegated to subcommittees.
 - Distributed new list of subcommittees and list of the proposed members for each subcommittee: Planning & Visioning – Martin, Chair; Baer; Ware; Leftkowitz; Duckett; and Lindsay. Project Review – Petersen, Chair; Harrison; Lynne; Taghipour; Kelly-Roberts; and Barksdale-Boyle. Economic Development – Fink, Chair; Hidalgo; Carrington; Schilke; Leo; Rothberg; and Brown. No requests were made by members to move to other subcommittees.

- The first organizational subcommittee meetings will be: Planning & Visioning – Monday, April 5 at 6:30pm at Mid-County Regional Center; Economic Development – Thursday, March 25 at 6:30 pm at Mid-County Regional Center; and Project Review – Thursday, March 25 at 6:30.
- Economic Development and Project Review subcommittees will meet at 7:00 on March 25th for a presentation by Washington Properties.

Several members expressed a desire to have subcommittee meetings held during work hours, as it is difficult for them to attend additional night meetings. Each subcommittee can discuss this matter at their 1st organizational meeting.

If an individual member of a subcommittee disagrees with a decision made by his/her subcommittee, the individual can express their thoughts at the full monthly WRAC meeting.

MOTION by Mr. Baker and seconded by Ms. Lefkowitz to –

- **Restructure WRAC Subcommittees to have a Planning & Visioning Subcommittee; Economic Development Subcommittee; and a Project Review Subcommittee.**
- **Amend the WRAC Ground Rules approved January 18, 2006. Existing language: “Issues brought before the WRAC may be referred to a subcommittee by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Advisory Committee” Amendment - add: “or by request or delegation of the WRAC Chair”.**
- **Amend the WRAC Ground Rules. Existing language: “Meetings will be held at the Mid-County Services Center.” Amendment: “Meetings are preferably held at the Mid-County Services Center, but flexibility in terms of an alternate location or locations may be considered by subcommittee members if approved by the Subcommittee Chair.”**

Motion for all three passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEM – Election of WRAC Vice-Chair. There were two nominees: Mr. Fink and Ms. Roberts, however, Ms. Roberts withdrew her nomination. There being no other nominations, Ms. Roberts nominated Mr. Fink, second by Ms. Brown. By unanimous vote, Mr. Fink was elected the new Vice-Chair for WRAC.

Recruitment of New Members by Mr. Baker

- Selection and appointment of new members has been delayed in the past, WRAC needs to work with staff to fill vacancies on time;
- Need to diversify the committee, more reflective of the community, i.e. urban pioneers and young couples/singles with fresh ideas;
- Brainstormed various ideas and ways to recruit new members i.e. a principle from a school such as Arcola Elementary; Kemp Mill Elementary; Einstein High School; and Sligo Elementary;
- Members were asked to think about neighbors, businesses and friends that might be interested in serving on the WRAC Committee;
- Wheaton Redevelopment Program staff did a mailing of approximately 400 about a year ago to try to recruit new members; the County sends out an email and it is advertised;
- Westfield will appoint a replacement for Ms. Goris within a month or so; and
- A nominating committee is needed to review the new Membership Applications.

Mr. Baker will discuss the above recruitment ideas with the WRAC Executive Committee and devise a game plan with time frames and bring it back to the full WRAC Committee for feedback.

Redevelopment Report by Mr. Klein

- Talked about the RFQ process and the due date of March 19th for proposals;
- April 5 Ms. Tallant will present the draft Sector Plan to the Sector Plan Subcommittee;
- April 8th, staff draft of Wheaton Sector Plan presented to Planning Board;
- June 3rd M-NCPPC anticipates to hold the Public Hearing;
- BB&T Project will go to Planning Board on May 20. This will be an action item for the April meeting to vote on a position;
- County Council introduced Zoning Text Amendment 10-04 authorizing automobile filling stations in a C-2 zone. A public hearing is set for 1:30 pm on April 20th.
- Vacancy rate increased from 2.4% in 2008 to 5.1% in 2009. The average cost for retail space fell from \$29.19 per sq. ft. in 2008 to **\$23.874** per sq. ft. in 2009. Retail space represents 33% of all commercial space countywide; in Wheaton, it constitutes 76% of all commercial space. Wheaton's 111 Restaurants/eateries make up 27% of Wheaton's 410+ retail-oriented businesses. Add ethnic markets/specialty foods and the segment grows to 35%. The economic downturn has had a significant impact on this sector;
- Retail space in Wheaton is approximately 18% lower than the County average; and
- Due to budget constraints, the County cannot fund Local 1st Wheaton in FY 2011. Local 1st Wheaton has decided to form a 501 (c) 6 Corporation.

Mr. Martin received an email from Councilmember Ervin stating the Council vote on Costco is tabled until the Impact Studies are completed on the Costco Service Station and Traffic.

Community Comments: Four citizens (Karen Cordry; Mark Meszaros; Larry Silverman and Dan Sheveiko) from Kensington Heights Citizens Association (KHCA) expressed their concerns regarding the proposed Costco gas station:

- WRAC letter to the County Council supporting Costco was without consultation with the residential community (KHCA) most affected by the potential development;
- the fueling station's close proximity to the residential community;
- the amount of traffic and trucks this type of fueling station would attract;
- storm water roll-off ;
- On May 4th the rules on flooding and storm water will change and become stricter – there is fear that Westfield is trying to get this project in before the deadline using the existing guidelines from the 1980's; if the project does go through, KHCA encourages the County to hold Westfield to the new storm water guidelines;
- the ZTA that would create exceptions for service stations in various areas;
- they would like for Costco to come talk to their community;
- there are concessions the County can make to Costco: one is the 4 millions dollars to Costco and the other is the ZTA – this is the time to let Costco know what we want;
- Costco doesn't fit into the Sector Plan that well – huge box right up to the ring road; no buffers or landscaping; operating outside the quiet zones and 60 feet high towering over the houses next to it;
- Wants the County to step back and try to make this project something that works for everyone.

Meeting adjourned at 9:04 pm